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THE

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE

BEFORE THE

ALABAMIAN INSTITUTE,

DELIVERED

DECEMBER 7, 1833,

IN THE HALL OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

BY ALVA WOODS, D. D.

PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA.

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INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

MR. PRESIDENT, AND MEMBERS OF THE INSTITUTE:

Called, in the midst of official duties, to deliver the Introductory Lecture before your Society, I beg leave to solicit your attention, for a short time, to *The Influence of Knowledge upon Man in his Social State.*

This influence is seen and felt in man's physical, political, and moral condition.

Why is it that the civilized man is more comfortable than the savage? Why is it that the former has wholesome food regularly, and clothing and habitation suitable to protect him from the vicissitudes of the seasons, while the latter is obliged to depend for his food upon the contingencies of the chase, and has no pillow for his head but the bosom of the earth, and no curtain for his bed but the canopy of heaven? Why is it that the civilized man is multiplying rapidly, and sending forth the overflowings of his population to colonize the earth, and to convert the wilderness into a fruitful field, while savages, even in a state of peace, dwindle and melt away before the face of civilization, like frosts before a rising sun? Is it not because savages are ignorant of agriculture, manufactures, and the various mechanic arts, that their physical condition is little better than that of the beasts of the forest?

What are all the improvements in labor-saving machinery, by which one person performs the work formerly requiring hundreds and thousands; what are the invented facilities for travelling and for the transportation of goods; what are all the improved methods of agriculture, by which the richness of the soil is ren-

dered inexhaustible, but so many indications of the march of mind? Is it not in consequence of the improvements in the machinery employed in manufactures, that the great mass of the people throughout the civilized world are now better clothed and at less expense than at any former period? Look at the increased facilities for diffusing knowledge since the invention of printing. A single English press, with the labor of two dozen persons, daily publishes newspapers, which would require a million and a half scribes to write them all by hand! The morning papers of London contain the debate of the preceding night in the House of Commons; and this too, though the debate may have continued till one, two, or three o'clock in the morning!

It has been said by an eminent English writer, that knowledge is power. He might have added, it is wealth. What is it which renders the State of Alabama one of the most wealthy and prosperous States in the Union? Shall I be told that it is the culture of the cotton plant, which furnishes nearly half the clothing of the inhabitants of the civilized world? But what is it which gives value to our cotton? Why was no cotton raised in the United States for export before the year 1785? and very little afterwards until the year 1793? It was because the labor of cleaning it by *hand* from the seeds and motes was too great to warrant it. It is to the genius of our countryman Whitney, that we are mainly indebted for the value of that article which sends wealth and plenty and comfort throughout our borders. Were it not for the invention of the cotton-gin by Whitney, and of the spinning-jenny by Arkwright, and of the power-loom by Cartwright, cotton would not be worth raising in this country as an article of export! By the improved machinery now in use, one person can produce two hundred times the quantity of cotton goods which one person could have produced in the year 1760! Yes, it is knowledge, which pours into our lap the horn of plenty. And yet how few of the thousands that enjoy

the benefit of these improvements, render due homage to the man of genius and of knowledge!

An uneducated mariner may conduct a ship in safety to a port thousands of miles distant. Though driven by storms and tempests for days and weeks, he may, by his observations on the heavenly bodies, ascertain his exact position on the wide ocean. Yet for all this successful navigation, he is indebted entirely to the knowledge which is furnished him by the mathematician and the astronomer. Take away his book of mathematical calculations, his instrument for astronomical observations, his chart and his compass, and he would never dare to venture out of sight of land. Every man in a civilized country depends on commerce for many of the comforts, if not of the necessities of life. Yet how few reflect that the foundation of commerce is laid in the knowledge of the man of study!

Look at our inland navigation. What is it which has given it existence? What is it which has made all our navigable streams channels of commerce?—which sends into the very heart of our country the productions of the most distant climes, and which enables us to find a ready market for all the fruits of our own industry? It is to the genius of our countryman Fulton, that we must render our acknowledgements for these benefits. Compare the progress of the flat-boat and the keel-boat with that of the Fulton steamer as she majestically ascends our boldest rivers. The railroad car, propelled by steam, and moving, as it were upon the wings of the wind, pays its homage to human genius.

In a word, of all animals, man is, in his infancy, the most destitute and helpless. Incapable of locomotion, and without natural covering, he continues longer in his dependant condition than other animals. And when arrived at adult age, he is still inferior to many animals in strength and in the acuteness and perfection of the external senses. It is to his *knowledge*, that man is indebted for his superiority to the brute creation. When

his powers are developed, and his mind instructed, he can subdue all other animals, and render them tributary to his will; can scan the heavenly bodies, as they move in grandeur throughout the immensity of space; measure their distances and magnitudes and periods of revolution, trace the planets in their regular orbits, and follow the comets in their more rapid and elliptic flight. The stars, which to the untaught eye, appear only like brilliants in the ear of beauty, are found by the educated man to be mighty revolving worlds, or the resplendent centres of other systems. The milky way, which seems to be only a thin shining film, like a virgin's zone, is seen by the eye of science to be a condensed congregation of other worlds or other suns.

That astronomy is not merely a speculative and useless science, but one which has an immediate bearing on the welfare of society, we have already seen. The same might be shown, were there time, with respect to all the arts and sciences;—not only the mechanic arts, but the fine arts.

That painting, poetry, music, architecture and other fine arts, have exerted an important influence in refining and polishing the human character, is capable of historic proof. They have exerted a mighty agency in reclaiming man from a savage to a civilized state.

But who can describe the unseen moral influence, which may be exerted on a community by historical paintings, commemorative of important events, or by faithful portraits of eminent men, whose lives are the history and glory of their country?

Who can tell how much the enthusiastic patriotism of the Romans was nourished by their admiration of their capitol, that splendid legislative hall, which contained the statues of their heroes, which witnessed the triumphs of their conquerors, and which was associated in their minds with all that was glorious in the history of their country?

Who can inform us how much the faith of a pious catholic at Rome is strengthened by his veneration of the church of St.

Peter, his admiration of its architectural beauty and magnificence, of its lofty columns and colossal statues, by the sacred awe with which he bows before the statue of St. Peter, and contemplates the revered figures of the holy Pontiffs.

The Emperor Napoleon understood well this principle of our nature, when he collected from every part of the continent of Europe the master-works in painting and statuary, and placed them in the Louvre at Paris, for the admiration of his countrymen. What Frenchman could have visited the Louvre in those days without adding fuel to the fire of his patriotism; and giving a fresh impulse to his enthusiastic attachment to that man, who had achieved thus much for his country's glory?

Of a similar character and influence was the Pere Le Chaise, a burying-ground established by Napoleon on the hills in the neighbourhood of Paris, and which is probably more beautiful and attractive than any object of the kind in any part of the world. It is a scene of constant resort for the Parisians.

With the same feeling no doubt, and with the same effect, Napoleon improved and adorned the public buildings and the public square of almost every town and city, which fell under his power. These improvements were not confined to France. You witness them every where in Italy, from Milan to Genoa, and from the Gulf of Venice to the Bay of Naples. The unfinished and splendid cathedral of Milan, in which he crowned himself, with the iron crown, King of Italy, which cathedral is so celebrated for its thousand statues, and so beautifully described by Addison, it was reserved for the Emperor Napoleon to complete. In a word, though he gathered as a nest the riches of the nations, he expended them with a liberal hand on those public objects which would identify his name with the pride and the glory of every city and nation which felt his power.

Who can tell what influence has been exerted, for many successive generations, upon the literature of England by Westminster Abbey, that most magnificent repository of the illustrious

dead, where sleep in honor the ashes of those who have rendered themselves eminent in the republic of letters?

What traveller in England has not perceived that St. Paul's Church is the pride of every Londoner and almost of every Englishman?

What is it but this feeling of veneration for whatever is associated with the history and glory of the country, which induces the House of Commons of Great Britain to continue to hold their sessions in the small, antiquated, and ill constructed church of St. Stephens?

Whatever is merely for pomp, and show, and idle parade, is evidently inconsistent with the simplicity of republican institutions. Such exhibitions may serve to dazzle an ignorant and enslaved multitude; and to puff up with vanity the minions of power, as, clothed with some brief authority, they strut their hour on the stage of public life.

But noble buildings, of the most durable materials, erected for legislative halls, or for purposes of education, are objects of just pride with every citizen. They are the common inheritance of the whole people. They are a bond of union to all the members of the body politic. The humblest citizen in the State has an equal right and property in them with the wealthiest and the loftiest.

But how is the majestic capitol, or the noble temple of science to arise? Many and strong hands must indeed be employed to rear the structure: but there must be intellect to guide those hands, and to teach them where to place the plain, substantial Doric pillar, where the graceful and elegant Ionic, and where the still lighter and more decorated Corinthian; and how to give to each column its just forms and proportions. In fine, there must be a cultivated taste, founded upon a proper regard to utility. It is Mind, cultivated Mind, which secures to us all those comforts and elegancies which distinguish civilized from savage man. The tendency of all the fine arts is, to refine the

manners and to purify the morals. It is not denied that higher and holier principles are necessary to change the moral character of man, and to raise him from vice to virtue. Still we maintain that the natural tendency of these studies is elevating, ennobling. We would conclude this part of our subject in the language of Sir Joshua Reynolds, that “every establishment which tends to the cultivation of the pleasures of the mind, as distinct from those of sense, may be considered as an inferior school of morality, where the mind is polished and prepared for higher attainments.”

In briefly touching upon the influence which a knowledge of some of the arts and sciences exerts upon man in his social state, it may be proper to notice that wonderful improvement or invention, by means of which a knowledge of all other improvements and inventions is preserved and perpetuated; I mean the *Art of Writing*. What must be the astonishment of the unlettered savage, when he learns for the first time, that, by means of *writing*, one individual can communicate his thoughts to another hundreds of miles distant: and that in this way, the thoughts of an individual may be transmitted from one generation of men to another, and from one country to another, down to the end of time!

From recent discoveries as to the meaning of the Egyptian hieroglyphics, it appears that alphabetical or artificial language is of earlier and more extensive use than had been supposed. Until recently, these hieroglyphics have for ages been to the learned a perfect labyrinth. But recent discoveries encourage the hope, that the whole system will, at no distant day, be unraveled:—that a new chapter in the history of man will be opened to our enraptured vision;—and that then we shall be able to learn what persons, what events, or what objects, were designed to be commemorated by the pyramids of Egypt.

But we have already before us undisputed examples of the transmission of knowledge by *writing* from a very remote period of time down to the present.

The Pentateuch, or Law of Moses, written about three thousand five hundred years ago, though at one time only a single copy of it existed, and that lay buried in the rubbish of the temple at Jerusalem, is now read by christians in every quarter of the globe.

The poems of Homer, chanted by a blind old man, almost three thousand years ago, and concerning which there is much doubt whether they were ever committed to writing by himself, are now the text-book of the scholar in every part of the republic of letters.

In the first century of the christian era, by an eruption from Mount Vesuvius, the cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii were entirely buried, and continued in that state till within a short time:—that is for the space of about seventeen centuries. These ruins are now partially excavated; and multitudes of manuscripts have been found, many of which, though apparently burnt to a coal, have been, by modern skill, unrolled:—and thus valuable works have been recovered, of which no other copies were extant.

Yes, written language is the master magician that communicates, by a talismanic power, the perceptions, the inventions and the discoveries of one generation to another. It is written language which records, as with a pen of iron and with the point of a diamond, the operations and results of active and useful intellect, and thus renders them imperishable:—and thus enriches, by continued and successive accumulation, the ever swelling tide that rolls for human happiness.

The art of printing has secured the duration of this most valuable of all means for the improvement of the human intellect. It has made Mind, if not immortal in this world, at least commensurate in the valuable effects of its labors, with the scene which it once viewed, and the objects which it once delighted to behold. The pale corse, in which it once dwelt and from whose earthly tenement it once radiated its celestial fires, may moulder and mingle with kindred atoms; but the fruits of its

labors are more durable than Arundelian marbles. They are conveyed to a continued succession of intelligences, like himself: and while this succession lasts, the labors of intellect will survive.

Were I able to present to the members of this Institute a complete history of the progress of literature and science in every age, the direct and powerful influence of knowledge upon the social condition of man, would be clear as the sunbeams of heaven.

“But,” to use the language of the illustrious Laplace, “as the arts by which alone the events of past ages can be transmitted in a durable manner are of modern invention, the remembrance of the first inventors in the arts and sciences has been entirely effaced. Great nations, whose names are hardly known in history, have disappeared from the soil which they inhabited; their annals, their language, and even their cities have been obliterated, and no remnant left of their science or their industry, but a confused tradition, and some scattered ruins of doubtful and uncertain origin.”

Still, with permission, I will briefly allude to some of the literary societies and eminent philosophers, who, by their knowledge, have guided, in some humble measure, the social destinies of man.

In the dark ages, when moral and mental science, and natural philosophy, were covered with the thickest gloom, the influence of eminent teachers, schools, and literary societies, was even more powerful than at present. The little learning which existed was transmitted through few channels. As there were ¹⁰ printed books, and few manuscripts, learning was communicated by oral instruction. The teacher was the sole *oracle*: and his opinions were received as undoubted truths. Hence eminent teachers became the heads of philosophical sects, which were perpetuated for centuries.

On the birth of Alexander the Great, 356 years before Christ,

his father, Philip of Macedon, wrote to Aristotle: "King Philip of Macedon to Aristotle, greeting. Know that a son has been born to me. I thank the gods, not so much that they have given him to me, as that they have permitted him to be born in the time of Aristotle. I hope thou wilt form him to be a King worthy to succeed me, and to rule the Macedonians." Of the manner in which Aristotle discharged the high trust thus reposed in him, and of the influence which he thus exerted on the age in which he lived, let the history of the subsequent splendid career of his royal pupil, tell. But the influence of this eminent philosopher was not confined to that generation. While the Macedonian empire, founded by Alexander, was, soon after his death, dismembered among his principal officers, the empire founded by Aristotle remained one and undivided for two thousand years. Even in the time of Galileo, not more than two hundred years ago, it was thought a sufficient argument to overturn any newly discovered fact in natural philosophy, "I cannot find it in Aristotle."

Now, thanks for our happier lot, knowledge pours forth her refreshing streams, intersecting all the walks of life. In ten thousand forms, from the ponderous folio to the daily periodical, science spreads before us its invaluable treasures. With books and teachers on every side, we are disposed to call no man master; but, in science as in morals, to require of every man a reason of his faith.

Much of the learning of modern times, may be traced to the establishment of the Alexandrian School, at Alexandria in Egypt. Upon the death of Alexander the Great, it is well known that his principal generals divided his empire among themselves; and that Egypt fell to the share of Ptolemy Soter, a prince whose love of science and munificence towards its professors, attracted to Alexandria, the capitol of his kingdom, a great number of the most learned men of Greece. His son Ptolemy Philadelphus, continued and increased the benefits conferred on them by

his father, and built the magnificent edifice which contained the celebrated Library collected by Demetrius Phalereus, and an astronomical observatory. This Alexandrian School was the first source of accurate and continued astronomical observations. Until the establishment of this School, the Greeks treated astronomy as a science purely speculative, and indulged in the most frivolous conjectures respecting it. Among the scholars of Alexandria, the name of Euclid, the father of scientific geometry, stands pre-eminent. It was in Egypt that Thales, the earliest philosopher of Greece, and the founder of the Ionian School, gathered his knowledge of philosophy. In the Ionian School were taught the sphericity of the earth, the obliquity of the ecliptic, and the true causes of the eclipses of the sun and moon. From the Ionian School arose Pythagoras, the chief of a school still more celebrated. All the knowledge of the Ionian School was taught on a more extensive scale in that of Pythagoras: and especially the two motions of the earth on its axis and about the sun.

The Alexandrian School, already mentioned, continued to flourish for more than five centuries, and to produce the most eminent philosophers, when, as has been observed, an event, the most calamitous and the most disgraceful to its perpetrators, laid in ruins its valuable library, and consumed in one hour the labors of its most celebrated philosophers.

During the long period from the year of our Lord 800, till the beginning of the fourteenth century, the western parts of Europe were involved in the utmost barbarity and ignorance; while the Arabians, profiting by the books which they had saved from the wreck of the Alexandrian Library, cultivated and improved all the sciences. It is to the Arabians that modern Europe is indebted for the first rays of light that dissipated the darkness in which it was enveloped during twelve centuries. They have transmitted to us the treasure of knowledge, which they received from the Greeks, who were themselves the disciples of the Egyptians.

In the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, academies and schools were established in various parts of Europe, which contributed much to the diffusion of knowledge, and eventually to the downfall of the Feudal System.

The translation of the sacred Scriptures into most of the languages of Europe, at the time of the Protestant Reformation, in the sixteenth century, greatly increased the number of readers and thinkers, awakened the energies of the human intellect from the slumber of ages, and exerted a powerful influence upon the religious opinions of men.

Ever since the revival of letters, the invention of printing, and the Protestant Reformation, there has been, I conceive, a steady progress in the great work of mental and moral improvement. This movement is, I trust, destined to be an onward one, until it shall embrace within the range of its elevating and purifying influence the whole human family.

Were there time, it might be proper to present to the members of this Institute a history of all those literary associations, which, in more modern times, under the name of Academies and Philosophical Societies, have contributed essentially to the progress of useful knowledge. These societies have generally been begun and carried on by few individuals; and yet the whole community have reaped the benefit of their labors.

The Institute of France, for example, the great literary society of that country, was established in 1795. It was formed out of the Royal Academy of Sciences, the French Academy, the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres, and the Academy of Painting and Sculpture. The members of the Institute were divided into four classes, each class devoting itself to the cultivation of some one particular department of knowledge. Each class was again divided into sections, each section devoting itself to some one branch of science. In short, the French Institute was a society formed under the patronage of the government for the cultivation of the Arts and Sciences. From the Papers or

Essays, read in this society, many valuable volumes have already been published. During all the vicissitudes of the French revolution, and the many fluctuations of parties, this society was acknowledged by all to be the glory of their nation, and the palladium of mental freedom.

The United States also have their American Philosophical Society at Philadelphia; the Massachusetts Historical Society; the American Academy of Arts and Sciences at Boston; the Historical Society of New-York; and many other societies too numerous to be mentioned.

In conclusion, permit me to say to the members of the Alabamian Institute, and to this respectable audience, who have honored us with their presence this evening, that the influence exerted by these literary societies, is beyond calculation. They call into active and useful exercise intellectual faculties which would otherwise remain dormant. They stimulate the members to make high intellectual efforts. It is by the action and re-action of mind upon mind, that it becomes polished and adorned. It is by the collision of intellect with intellect, that eminent men are produced. Retrace the history of distinguished literary and scientific men. Why is it that they have generally appeared in the world not singly, but in clusters? — not in solitary splendor, but in bright and glorious constellations? Why has every nation its golden age of literature? Is nature more prolific in genius at one period than at another? Or is it because the precious gems of nature are left at one time unheeded in their native rubbish, and, at another time, are gathered up and polished and beautified by the hand of art? Does not the principal difference consist in the different inducements which are held out, at different times, for the cultivation of talent? When powerful incentives are applied, the mind is awakened to powerful action; and intellectual greatness is the result.

What would posterity have known of George Washington and of that bright galaxy of patriots that gilded our western horizon

in the days of the American revolution, had it not been for those causes which called forth the talents and the virtues of these men ? Had it not been for the oppressions of the British Government, which kindled the souls of our fathers to a holy ardor in the cause of freedom, their names might never have stood forth, in bold relief, on the page of history, for the gaze and admiration of coming ages.

These literary associations may also exert a kindly influence on the feelings and manners of those whose example is regarded as authority. The members, by meeting and mingling in the same delightful pursuits of literature and science, may soften those asperities of feeling, which are often produced in their own minds, by differences of opinion on other subjects. They may thus pour oil upon those waves which often agitate and heave a community.

These literary societies may also exert a wholesome influence upon the cause of morals and of freedom. All error flourishes best in the darkest shades of ignorance: and tyranny, whether civil or ecclesiastical, holds an undisputed sway only where the light of knowledge pours not its radiant beams. The foundations of despotism are sapped, and its whole fabric endangered, by schools and colleges, by literary societies and printing presses, and by all similar means for irradiating the human understanding with the light of truth. Sixty-four years after the first settlement of Virginia, Sir William Berkly, then Governor of that province, in an official communication to the lords of the colonies, observed, "I thank God, that there are no free-schools nor printing presses here; and I hope we shall not have them here these hundred years; for learning hath brought disobedience and heresy and sects into the world, and printing hath divulged them in libels against the best governments."

The mind when duly enlightened, must perceive its own native dignity and inestimable value; and be disposed to maintain that dignity against all encroachments. The enlightened mind

will perceive the purpose for which power is delegated, and for which government is established; and will not be disposed to sustain any government, when it subverts the very end for which all governments should exist.

The question, then, whether any community shall be enlightened, is a question whether it shall be free. An enlightened community cannot long be an enslaved community; and an ignorant community cannot long be a free community. Take the most despotic country in Europe or Asia, in which the will of the despot is the only law; and establish throughout that country schools and colleges and printing-presses; put into every man's hand our code of christian morals; send the school-master through the land; in a word, enlighten the whole mass of the people; and that people will speedily work out their political salvation. They will hurl from their necks the iron yoke of bondage, and dash in pieces the tyrant's sceptre.

Take again the most free and enlightened nation in the civilized world: for example, our own. Shut up our schools and colleges; banish our teachers; burn our books and printing-presses, and American liberty will be entombed with the present generation. Our children, covered with worse than Egyptian darkness, will hug, in silent submission, the chains which bind their souls and their bodies to the car of despotism:

And the star-spangled banner no longer shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

But we hope better things of our American Republic, and things which accompany our salvation, though we thus speak. And we trust that this small society, formed for the cultivation of letters, may contribute its humble part towards that general diffusion of knowledge, without which our republic will prove to be but the baseless fabric of a vision:— and that other societies for similar purposes may be formed, and with the happiest results.

We live, my friends, in a day favorable to voluntary associations for literary improvement. No longer is learning confined

to the cloister of the priest, or to the grove of the philosopher. No longer is it necessary to travel to Egypt, or even to England, to obtain knowledge. The temple of science is opened wide to all her votaries ; and her treasures are offered freely as the waters of life.

But while we congratulate ourselves on living in a day in which learning is more widely diffused than at any former period, let us not forget our dangers. Let us remember that what is common and easily obtained, is often but lightly esteemed. When the philosopher of Greece was obliged to resort to Egypt to acquire learning, and was there cautiously initiated into its secret mysteries, which were carefully concealed from the public eye, he must have placed a high value on his literary opportunities and his literary attainments. When our fathers were obliged to send their sons to Europe to be educated, at a time when a voyage across the Atlantic was longer and more uncomfortable than at present, they no doubt placed a higher estimate on education than we do, who have it brought to our doors, and made common as the waters which we drink, and the air which we breathe. But let us be assured, that learning, however common, can never lose its value :— that it is that which disarms fortune of half her power over us ;— that which sheds light upon the soul in the dark hour of adversity, and which imparts purest pleasure in the day of prosperity.

And knowledge is the strongest safe-guard for our religious as well as our civil privileges. These United States, in which knowledge is more generally diffused than in any other nation, is the first country under heaven in which perfect liberty of conscience, and perfect freedom of opinion on all religious matters, were ever guarantied to all the members of the community. Indeed what other country is there in which entire religious liberty is enjoyed even to this day ? Do we wish a continuance of these blessings ? Let us remember that sleepless vigilance is the price both of religious and political freedom. Let us, then, never

cease to guard the bowers of our earthly paradise against all the inroads of the common enemy of man, in whatever shape or form he may come. Let us throw around our American Eden the strong bulwarks of knowledge: — and let us water it with the pure and ever flowing streams of literature and science. Let us engrave it as upon monumental marble, *that literary institutions, well established and guided by intelligent and virtuous men, are the surest pledges of the stability of our American Republic, and of the perpetuity of our civil and religious freedom.* Such institutions are the verdant spots, in the annals of a country's glory, on which the eye of a future historian will repose with unmingled delight. When, in the lapse of time, the names of mightiest conquerors shall be buried in forgetfulness, the memory of distinguished patrons of learning will remain in ever-during freshness; and will be hallowed in the grateful recollections of every succeeding generation of scholars.

In this state, in which Providence has cast our lot, there exist all the elements of physical, intellectual, and moral greatness. Let these elements continue to be brought into powerful action, under the direction of the lovers of knowledge, and under the guidance of an impartial judiciary and of an enlightened and liberal Legislature, and Alabama will inevitably be a star of the first magnitude in the galaxy of the Union.

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